

## ESPA Comprehensive Management Plan Framework Development

### Introduction:

The Idaho Water Resource Board has been tasked with developing an Eastern Snake River Plain Comprehensive Management Plan framework for presentation to the 2007 legislature. The desire of the legislature is to establish public policy as a settlement framework for future management of the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer (Figure 1). The first phase will be development of a framework plan, which will be presented to the 2007 Legislature. The second phase, depending on guidance from the Legislature, will be development of a comprehensive management plan.

### Scope:

The Board will contract for professional facilitator services to assist in the public process described in Senate Concurrent Resolution 136. Conclusions on project scope reached by the Board at a meeting held May 17, 2006 include:

1. Process to be open and public
2. Plan to be comprehensive but have sideboards
3. Plan framework should include interim measures that may be implemented before a comprehensive plan is final
4. Plan should address
  - a. Aquifer Management Goals
  - b. Level of management in order to adjust water demand and legally and administratively available water supply.
  - c. Funding mechanisms for implementation of management alternatives
5. Context for the plan framework
  - a. Legal constraints and precedents
  - b. Technical/modeling tools
  - c. Existing studies and plans

### Preliminary Approach:

The Board has determined that the most effective way to engage the public, affected parties to ongoing litigation and stakeholder groups is to formulate a series of Aquifer Management Alternatives which will be based on adjusting or balancing water demand and legally and administratively available supply. For initial discussion, multiple levels of management will be defined and will include minimal, modest and aggressive options (Table 1). Aquifer water budget components for recharge and discharge will be the quantification targets associated with the options. Expected changes for various options to aquifer ground water levels and river flows will be determined using models and measurements provided by IDWR, IWRRI, USGS and other contractors. Specific measures and techniques that can be used to accomplish the desired water budget adjustments will be described. Costs for implementation of the various management levels will also be determined. Some initial evaluation of the economic cost/benefit of the alternatives will also be attempted. Major items that must be addressed include adaptive mechanisms to quantify progress and adjust implementation measures. The Framework

Plan will address funding mechanisms, including development of a fee structure, to support selected management alternatives.

Process:

The Board decided at its May 18 meeting that a professional facilitator is vital to help craft a framework plan. The facilitator will be the point of contact, independent of the Board or IDWR, keep the process on track and provide leadership for the process, facilitate information flow and communication.

The facilitator and the Board will decide details of the process, including public involvement. An initial process schedule has been developed by staff and was presented to the Board on June 8, 2006 (Table 2). The schedule anticipates presentation of management options and opportunity for public comment, development of the framework plan, additional public meetings to present the preliminary recommendation of the Board, public comment on the framework, and presentation of the framework plan and public comment to the 2007 legislature.